

(g) An application by a political subdivision and the designation by the Secretary of an area as an enterprise zone shall constitute the State approval that may be required for designation as an enterprise zone under federal law.

(h) Before designating an enterprise zone, the Secretary shall consult with and ask the advice of the [Department's Advisory Commission] APPROPRIATE INDIVIDUALS AND ADVISORS.

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(a) The Secretary may not designate any area an enterprise zone unless that area satisfies at least one of the following requirements:

(1) The average rate of unemployment in the area, or within a reasonable proximity within that county to that area, for the most recent 18 month period for which data are available must be at least 150 percent of the average rate of unemployment in either the State of Maryland or the United States, whichever average rate is greater, during that same period;

(2) The population in the area or within a reasonable proximity within that county to that area is a low-income poverty area on the basis of the most recent census;

(3) At least 70 percent of the families living in the area or within a reasonable proximity within that county to that area have incomes that are less than an amount equal to 80 percent of the median family income within the political subdivision in which the area is located; or

(4) Population in the area or within a reasonable proximity within that county to that area decreased by 10 percent between the date of the most recent census and the date of the immediately preceding census, and the political subdivision can demonstrate to the Secretary's satisfaction that either chronic abandonment or demolition of property is occurring in that area or substantial property tax arrearages exist within that area.

(b) The Secretary may establish by regulation any other requirements that the Secretary reasonably determines are necessary and appropriate to assure that the purposes of this subtitle are satisfied.

(c) In determining if an area meets the requirements of this section the Secretary may consider data provided by the United States Bureau of the Census from the most recent census or any other reliable data which the Secretary determines to be acceptable for the purposes for which such data are used.

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